
Prepared for

**Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Division of Transportation Investment Management
Bureau of Planning**

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Executive Summary

**Stakeholder Interviews
Concerning WisDOT Transportation Planning
Connections
2030**

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Summary, Findings & Recommendations

Overview of Results

Based on the input from the interviews, several key themes emerged in regard to the past and future planning processes, public participation in that process and the significant issues confronting transportation planning in Wisconsin:

Planning Efforts

- A majority (53%) of respondents rated WisDOT's past planning efforts as "Good" or Very Good". Most indicated that WisDOT's efforts have improved significantly and generally produce good plans.
- Most negative comments pertained to the implementation process. Respondents voiced concerns that plans were unlikely to be implemented for political or funding reasons.
- Respondents also indicated a desire for a closer link between economic, land use and transportation planning on local, statewide and regional levels.
- Respondents indicated a need for mid-range (5-10 year) planning horizon with specific, achievable goals.

Public Involvement

- Respondents have lauded WisDOT's efforts at public involvement, while indicating that they're not always effective. Most have indicated this may be more an indictment of the audience, rather than WisDOT.
- WisDOT should take a "big tent" approach in involving the public and stakeholders, but offer different levels of involvement for each.

Identifying Needs

- There is strong concurrence that future funding for projects, the emphasis upon highway/road construction and the need for regional cooperation are and will continue to be the top issues the department will need to address more effectively.

- Freeway capacity and condition was identified as the most serious problem facing our transportation system.
- Many respondents see the 2030 planning process as an opportunity to seek regional solutions and implement design alternatives which are multi-modal in nature.
- There is a relatively strong sense that certain modalities and interests receive significantly more attention and funding than others – the reason often attributed to the political effectiveness and lobbying skills of those interests.

Funding

- A majority of respondents believe funding is inadequate based on unmet need (both maintenance and expansion). The rest believe funding is adequate, based on level of taxation.
- Most all favor a continued reliance on user fees as the predominant funding method. Respondents are mixed on tapping general revenue funds, but recognize the magnitude of future needs will necessitate an examination of alternative funding sources and formulae.
- The highest priorities for future investments were: Highway / Road Improvement; Airport expansions/upgrades and Bus or van transit improvements.

Recommendations

The following are summary recommendations related to the process and procedure for the public involvement process. Recommendations on the substance of the planning process are outside the scope of this study.

- Public information and outreach efforts should strive to provide the broadest possible spectrum of early involvement and avoid the appearance of granting undue attention to particular modes or interest groups.
- Technical intricacies associated with complex studies are often of less interest to the broad-based public than the process by which the design plan is arrived at. Accordingly, the public information

outreach should endeavor to assure that care is taken to communicate benefits and impacts in terms that can be easily understood.

- Public involvement efforts should clearly outline the process for securing input and emphasize the way in which such input will be considered in the development of the plan.
- Care should also be taken to educate the public about both the plan elements and the implementation process. Among those whom WisDOT should involve are: local and state elected officials, association representatives and local planning organizations.
- Those who request information or choose to become involved in the public information process should be kept regularly informed through means such as internet / website information, public forums, direct mail and one-on-one contacts.